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Q2(c)

"Indian rural society is a faction-ridden society." Discuss.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society

Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- "Indian rural society is a faction-ridden society." Discuss
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Village studies found factions around patrons and dominant castes.

Factions organise local politics and resources.

They often cut class solidarity vertically.

The phrase fits many settlements, not a mystical Indian trait.

Landless and women may stand outside the faction game.

Introduction

- **Indian villages are often faction-ridden:** competing parties of kin, caste, and patrons, not a harmonious republic. The statement is largely true, and incomplete if faction hides class.

Body**Factions as structure**

- Srinivas's **Rampura** showed factions around dominant-caste leaders, land, and honour.
- S. C. Dube's **Shamirpet** treated leadership and communication as split, not as one community mind.
- Oscar Lewis and others mapped vertical factions that cut across some jatis through **patronage**.

What factions do

- They organise votes, irrigation turns, and village office. Kothari's caste politics has a local faction face.
- They can mute horizontal class unity of mazdoors, which Desai would stress.

Limit of the phrase

- Not every village is equally split. Some show caste blocs more than personal factions.
- Women and landless may be in the village without being in the faction.

Flow diagram

Dominant caste land -> Factions
Factions -> Votes irrigation office
Class of labour -> Muted by vertical factions

Conclusion

Rural India is frequently faction-ridden because land and honour produce rival followings. Sociology should read factions as organised power, not as rustic quarrels without structure.

Facts & figures

Rampura

Srinivas's case of faction beside caste and dominant power.

Shamirpet

Dube's village of competing leadership, not one will.

Patronage

Vertical ties that make factions more than party labels.

Panchayat contests

Contemporary electoral form of old faction fights.